



**CABINET FOR HEALTH SERVICES
COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
FRANKFORT KENTUCKY 40621-0001**



DEPARTMENT FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND
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Memorandum

To: Executive Directors, Regional MH/MR Boards
Members, Joint Committee on Information Continuity

From: Bruce W. Scott
Director, Division of Mental Health

Date: September 3, 2003

Subject: Certification of Mental Health Data

I am writing to inform you of our plans to certify mental health data for the purposes of planning and reporting performance. The change will not have a financial impact on your operations. The issue will be on the agenda of the next meeting of the Joint Committee for Information Continuity (JCIC) on September 17, 2003.

Planning and Reporting Performance

For more than a decade, mental health organizations have invested state, federal, and local money to develop an information infrastructure that supports the improvement of the quality and accessibility of services. Federal and state funding authorities are increasingly expecting information from these systems as the basis for accountability for funds. The federal Center for Mental Health Services, in particular, is requiring the submission of performance information using the infrastructure they helped to fund through their "MHSIP" project.

In addition, the quality of Regional MH/MR Board data has improved to the point where state and regional planners can reliably use it to identify trends, problem areas, and opportunities for improvement. For example, hospital and regional board staff increasingly use indicators to improve continuity of care, and indicators are part of the block grant planning process for flexible regional funding. We are collecting more outcome information, and it will be increasingly used with client and event data to develop outcome-oriented performance indicators that will be helpful to clinical leadership of our organizations.

However, data may continue to be submitted after it is processed to develop a report. As a result, indicator information may change over time, causing confusion for planners and creating doubts about the reliability of our data among oversight organizations. Among the reports that are affected are:

- Uniform Data Tables—produced annually for the federal CMHS block grant;
- Performance Indicators – produced semi-annually for CMHS;
- CMHC Summary Client Data—updated continuously for the KDMHMRS website;
- State Hospital Summary Client Data—KDMHMRS website.

Certification of Data

Given the increasing need to provide reliable reports to state and federal funders and to use data for decision support, we are proposing to “certify” or lock-down a fiscal year’s data on the October 15 following the close of the fiscal year. For example, SFY 2003 data would be certified on October 15, 2003. Planning Information developed on that fiscal year’s data would only use data submitted prior to the certification date.

This change will not affect the ability of a Regional Board to enter data following the certification. However, data submitted after the certification date will not be used in planning reports that may display trend information. The reports will be annotated to reflect that the data behind some information may be incomplete, and will identify major incompleteness problems when they are known.

The data certification will not effect financial arrangements in contracts. A time may arrive when data certification becomes vital for assessing performance-related contracts; further discussion of the process will be necessary, then.

Closing

We think this change will increase the reliability of our reporting, especially reports that compare data across fiscal years. The issue will be on the agenda for the upcoming JCIC meeting on September 17. In the meantime, if you have concerns about this change, please contact Lou Kurtz or Hope Barrett at 502/564-4448.

Cc: Margaret A. Pennington
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Linda Harney
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